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12.22 hrs.

**(ii) Early Completion of four lane road
from Jalandhar to Amritsar and steps taken
by the Govt. in regard thereto**

Title: Shri Navjot Singh Sidhu called the attention of the Minister of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways regarding early completion of four lane road from Jalandhar to Amritsar and steps taken by the Government in this regard.

MR. SPEAKER: Item No.9 - Calling Attention by Shri Navjot Singh Sidhu.

SHRI NAVJOT SINGH SIDHU (AMRITSAR): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to call the attention of the Hon. Minister of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon:

"Early completion of four lane road from Jalandhar to Amritsar and steps taken by the Government in regard thereto."

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

(SHRI T.R. BAALU): Hon. Speaker, Sir, the length of National Highway No.1 from Jalandhar to Amritsar is about 69 km. The section of 20 km. length starting from Jalandhar is to be developed into four lane facility as part of other projects approved along with National Highways Development Project (NHDP) Phase-II. The remaining 49 km. is identified for development under NHDP Phase-III on BOT basis, which is yet to be approved by the Government.

The estimated cost of upgradation of the 20 km. section from Jalandhar to Amritsar being developed under NHDP Phase-II is Rs.124 crore. The bids for the civil works for this section were received on 21.08.2003 and after technical evaluation the financial bids were opened on 10.11.2003. M/s. Birla GTM Enterpose Ltd. and M/s. Ashoka Buildcon (JV) quoted lowest bid price for the work.

Meanwhile, it was decided to initiate proceedings for blacklisting of M/s. Birla GTM Enterpose Ltd. And debarring it from participation in the future contracts of NHAI for having earlier secured another contract by misrepresentation. M/s. Birla GTM Enterpose Ltd. has approached Delhi High Court against the blacklisting proceedings and the matter is *sub judice*. No decision regarding award of contract has, therefore, been taken so far.

The balance 49 km. is proposed to be taken up under the proposed NHDP Phase-III, which is yet to be approved by the Government. The detailed project report for this section has already been completed.

SHRI NAVJOT SINGH SIDHU : Sir, the statement made by the hon. Minister is self-contradictory. There is a paradox to that statement. ...*(Interruptions)* Just of minute, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: We are waiting to hear "Sidhuism".

SHRI NAVJOT SINGH SIDHU : I have got a very strong memory. You can consult me even on anything. ...*(Interruptions)* Four months ago, I had raised the same question and the hon. Minister had replied very clearly that for further remaining 50 km. of the length of the road from Jalandhar to Amritsar, tenders have been invited on BOT basis very recently. Today, if you have a look at his statement, he writes that the balance 49 kilometres is proposed to be taken up and the proposal is yet to be approved by the Government. If it was not approved four months ago, how were the tenders called? That is the first question I want to ask from the hon. Minister. He must get his facts right and then distort them. This matter is not about a road. It is a very urgent matter which undermines the pride and the prestige of a nation. You go down to Pakistan. You cross the border. There is a six-lane road awaiting you. It makes a statement. It makes a statement about the infrastructure of the area. They are not economically as strong as we are. You talk of the National Highway from Delhi to Amritsar. It is a very important, strategic National Highway. Now the entire stretch from Delhi to Jalandhar, that is, about 500 kilometres, has been a four-lane stretch. From there, you have a 25 feet wide road leading to Amritsar. Now, militarily, it is very strategic. It is loaded with tonnes and tonnes of surplus food grains. It is not talking about Punjab. It is talking about Himachal

Pradesh. There are apples rotting in the Himachal Pradesh. We do not want link only to Amritsar. We want to go to Uzbekistan. We want the border to open. The talk has begun. The ice is melting. The volatile situation, which existed two or three years ago, is no longer prevalent at the moment. What impression does anybody get when he enters the border and sets foot in India? A 25 feet road awaits him, full of potholes, innumerable potholes. There are about 20 to 25 mishaps every week, Mr. Minister.

Let me tell you about something else, about the volume on this road. Just four months ago, there were three million people who converged on to Amritsar just to pay their obeisance to the *Darbar Sahib*. It is the Vatican of the Sikhs. It is not the Sikhs alone, people from every nook and corner emerged to Amritsar to pay their obeisance. We are proud of Taj Mahal. People who go to Taj Mahal, ten times of that volume go to Amritsar. And it is not about that also. You tell me about this. If there is an important event or in the event of a war breaking out, how does the Army get its transportation done? Can you reply? How is the Army going to transport its materials? It is the richest economic pocket. There cannot be any fruit without the root. Any basic infrastructure needs road. We have been ignored too long. The hon. Chairperson of the Jalianwala Bagh Committee is Madam Sonia Gandhi. When you talk of the national freedom -- it is all about blood, sweat, toil and tears -- you talk of Punjabis, not Punjabis alone but Himachalis, about J&K. Why is Amritsar being ignored? Why is the border area being ignored? And why have you got tenders for the entire stretch of 500 kilometres of road? What beckons you to get tenders for the 50 kilometres of road which has not been made? Let me enlighten you. Two years ago, the work had started. The funds had been allocated by General Khanduri. He will vouch for that. Why has it been stalled?

MR. SPEAKER: Let him digest so many questions. I compliment you.

DR RATTAN SINGH AJNALA (TARN TARAN): Hon. Speaker Sir, Governments change but why are developmental schemes of the earlier Government put in cold storage? They are concerned with the progress of the country. I would urge the hon. Minister that this is an important scheme that was started by the earlier Government. It should not stop with the change in Government. This road is important for us. This should be completed.

SHRI NAVJOT SINGH SIDHU : Sir, we were self-sufficient.â€ (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Do you want to supplement? You have put your case. You cannot do it. I am allowing you because of your sportsmanship. It should not be taken as a precedent.

SHRI NAVJOT SINGH SIDHU : Thank you very much, Sir. Troubles and weeds thrive on lack of attention. So, I am drawing his attention.

हम लोग आत्मनिर्भर थे। अगर आप हमको ऐसे ही इग्नोर करते रहेंगे तो हम सब लोग डूब जाएंगे। यह बहुत इंपॉर्टेंट पॉइंट है और मंत्री जी के लिए एक शेर अर्ज़ है

"सूखे पत्ते पाँव तले जब आते हैं,

अपनी बेकद्री पे शोर मचाते हैं।

मैं भी अपनी हालत पे चीखा तो क्या,

दरिया भी जब सूखे हों तो खाक उड़ाते हैं। "

वहां खाक उड़ रही है। देखिये वहां क्या हो रहा है।

*â€œ... English translation of the speech originally delivered in Punjabi.

MR. SPEAKER: I do not think you can reply with a 'sher'!

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, it is a great opportunity for me to reply to my esteemed friend.

MR. SPEAKER: Have you got a fitting '*sher*' to reply him back?

SHRI T.R. BAALU: In my younger days I used to applaud and congratulate my friend when he was playing test matches.

MR. SPEAKER: Not as a commentator!

You have got many admirers here.

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, the question being asked is whether 49 km stretch is to be taken into consideration for development. I would like to inform the hon. Member that we have included it under the National Highways Development Project, which is proposed to be called as NHDP Phase-III. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI NAVJOT SINGH SIDHU : No....*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: No interruptions, please.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI T.R. BAALU: I agree with him. My friend has said that the then Minister, Maj. Khanduri, had already got it approved and sanctioned. I think my friend is mis-informed. With all my simplicity and humbleness, I would like to say that you are hundred per cent mis-informed. Maj. Khanduri is here in the House. He has not even taken the 10,000 km. programme to the Cabinet. It has not been approved. Today, I have taken it to the Public Investment Board for its concurrence. After the PIB approves it, I will take it to the Cabinet. It is a fact. If there is any controversy, I think your friend can come to your rescue. I would like to say that 49 km. stretch is to be taken up and considered under NHDP Phase-III on BOT basis. As far as 20 km. stretch is concerned, I cannot help it and you need not insist on my answering it because the matter is *sub judice*. We will take up 49 km. stretch under NHDP Phase-III and see that the work is taken up at the earliest.

Sir, the hon. Member has accused me saying that there is no approval....*(Interruptions)*

SHRI NAVJOT SINGH SIDHU : You are obligated to try your level best. Nobody is perfect.

सोने में सुगन्ध नहीं, गन्ने में फूल नहीं, चन्दन में फल नहीं होता, राजा दीर्घजीवी नहीं होता, विद्वान के पास धन नहीं होता, कभी किसी को मुकम्मल जहाँ नहीं मिलता। â€œ (व्यवधान)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing is going on record.

*(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister has assured you and he has also invited you.

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, I was also part and parcel of the previous Government. I know what has happened.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, you may invite him and talk to him.

SHRI T.R. BAALU: As far as 49 km. stretch is concerned, it will be taken into consideration. Sir, the Member has accused me saying that since there was no approval, why did I call for the tender. It is not a sin to call for the tender. We have identified the stretch which is to be taken up under NHDP Phase-III and called for tender. As and when it will be approved by the Cabinet, next day the work will start on this.

MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B. C. KHANDURI (GARHWAL): May I say something? My name has been taken during the discussion.

MR. SPEAKER: He has mentioned you as the then Minister. There was no allegation against you. You cannot speak on that ground. Please cooperate.

प्रो. विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा : अध्यक्ष जी, सिद्ध जी ने पूछा था कि चार महीने पहले आपने कहा था कि हो चुके हैं। You have said that four months ago....*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: It is not permitted.

* Not Recorded.

SHRI T.R. BAALU: It is a fact. It is not that we cannot call for tender.

The stretch has been identified already. Therefore, we have called for the tenders. The tenders are ready and they have to be opened. As and when it is cleared by the Cabinet, we can open them.

MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B. C. KHANDURI : Sir, I want to say something as my name has been taken.

MR. SPEAKER: I am sorry, I cannot permit you. Once it is allowed, it would create problems in future.

*(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded. Gen. Khanduri, please excuse me. You inform me and I will pass it on to him.

MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B. C. KHANDURI : Sir, it does not help.

MR. SPEAKER: Very well. I cannot help it.

* Not Recorded